An early school experience that I vividly remember was in middle school. In 6th grade, our teacher Ms. Knockles did an exercise that would help us with presentations and public speaking. She made everyone in the class, one by one, stand up in front of the room and present a topic about anything we wanted to. This was just so we could get used to speaking in front of class. I remember anytime a person said the word "um" or "like" she would deduct points off our grade. She graded us even though it was just practice for public speaking in the future. I was very shy all the way up until 8th grade, so I was clearly not thrilled about standing alone in front of the class and speaking. Now a days, I still get the "jitters" but I have no problem with speaking in front of a class. I remember I was so nervous I used the word "um" a lot, and talked very fast just to get the presentation over with. Afterwards, everyone came up to me and congratulated me on my speaking. They said I did seem very nervous but that I did the best I could. They were also shocked to hear me speak in such detail because I barely said a word in that class. It made me feel really good to hear such positive feedback. It also felt good knowing I could speak without being judged so critically, which was my biggest fear back in middle school.

Not only was my public speech frightening, but it had opened a lot of doors for me when making friends. After that public speaking day, I felt more comfortable to talk to the kids in my class, and say whatever was on my mind. It opened up many social doors for me. I started talking more and more to this one girl in my class, Alexis, who was the first person to congratulate me on my speech. She did give me her honest opinion about how I seemed nervous and I was talking too fast, but I appreciated how she gave me her honest constructive criticism. We started to talk more and more every day not only about class, but friends, the school, then turning into our family and outside life. We went from being just two students in the same class, to friends in a matter of a couple weeks. It felt good knowing I had made a friend in the class because I was so quite. It helped me to start coming out of my shell, and I began to feel unafraid to speak to anybody in the class. It is funny how a little exercise like that would help me in my social mobility and sense of humor to come out. That moment in 6th grade is one I'll never forget. The moments in which we feel like were changing, or the "old" me is being thrown away, is not such a bad thing. It is perhaps the milestones in our life that helped us become the people we are today. There is no time to waste in improving our weaker sides and setting our insecurities aside to experience the fun and important moments in life.